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ACTION IO-19

INFO LOG-00 AMAD-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EUR-01 HA-09 INRE-00
INR-01 ADS-00 NSAE-00 OIC-02 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-01
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-----0B7445 051135Z /38

P 051136Z FEB 92
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6232
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3779
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMCONSUL ZURICH

UNCLAS GENEVA 00985

USIA FOR P/M, P/FW, P/G, P/PF, VOA/BXC
SECSTATE FOR EUR/CE, IO, HR/HA

E.O. 12356: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: VENEZUELA

SWISS HEADLINES FEB. 5 INCLUDED "VENEZUELA GOVERNMENT
SUSPENDS CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING COUP ATTEMPT" (JOURNAL DE
GENEVE), "ATTEMPTED COUP D'ETAT CRUSHED WITH BLOODSHED"
(NOUVEAU QUOTIDIEN, LAUSANNE), "VENEZUELA PUTSCH FAILS"
(TAGES-ANZEIGER, ZURICH), AND "MILITARY PUTSCH AGAINST
PRESIDENT PEREZ FOILED" (BERNER ZEITUNG).

LEFT-OF-CENTER BASLER ZEITUNG COMMENTED EDITORIALY, UNDER
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THE TITLE "DEMOCRACY'S UNFULFILLED HOPES": "IN VENEZUELA
TROOPS TRIED TO OUST PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, A
NOTED DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL STATE. A DEMOCRACY
WHICH APPEARED AMONG LATIN AMERICA'S FIRMEST WAS SHAKEN.
LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION, VENEZUELA HAS BEEN
SMARTING UNDER AN ECONOMIC PURGE. PLUNGING OIL PRICES AND
34 BILLION DOLLARS OF FOREIGN DEBT MADE PEREZ, AN
ENTHUSIASTIC REFORMER IN HIS FIRST TERM, INTO A STRICT
SAVER IN HIS SECOND. THE MIDDLE CLASS AND THE POOR WERE
THE FIRST TO SUFFER FROM HIS ECONOMY DRIVE. EVENTS IN
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2008 200503656

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VENEZUELA SHOW THAT EVEN A LONG-ESTABLISHED DEMOCRACY--ITS OWN IS 34 YEARS OLD--CAN BE FRAGILE. IN LATIN AMERICA, THE ARMY IS THE TRADITIONAL WATCHDOG--ALWAYS READY TO SPRING WHEN IT THINKS THE GOVERNMENT HAS LOST FACE. CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ CLEARLY WAS BLIND TO THE DANGER; HE HAD TOO MUCH FAITH IN HIS CHARISMA."

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HUMAN RIGHTS

LEFT-OF-CENTER BASLER ZEITUNG FEB. 5 CARRIED THE FOLLOWING AGENCY TELEGRAPHIQUE SUISSE (ATS) GENEVA DISPATCH: "IRAQ COMMITTED GRAVE HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING ITS OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT, ACCORDING TO THE SWISS WALTER KAE LIN. IN A REPORT PRESENTED IN GENEVA TUESDAY, THE SPECIAL RAPPOREUR OF THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SAID IRAQI AUTHORITIES WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SYSTEMATIC TORTURE OF PRISONERS, SUMMARY EXECUTIONS, AND ABDUCTION OF CIVILIANS. TWO THOUSAND PERSONS WERE STILL MISSING."

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BASLER ZEITUNG ALSO RAN AN AP/GERMAN PRESS AGENCY (DPA) STORY FROM LONDON AND BONN HEADED "RAPISTS IN UNIFORM": "HUNDREDS OF WOMEN ARE EACH YEAR RAPED OR OTHERWISE SEXUALLY ABUSED IN PRISONS, SAID THE LONDON-BASED HUMAN-RIGHTS ORGANIZATION AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. EVEN IN NATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WOMEN WERE NOT SAFE FROM 'RAPISTS IN UNIFORM.' THE ORGANIZATION WAS PARTICULARLY INDIGNANT THAT 'MANY GOVERNMENTS REGARD SUCH ABUSE AS A LESS-SERIOUS RIGHTS VIOLATION, AND EVEN AS A PECCADILLO.' AMNESTY SAID EVEN LITTLE GIRLS UNDER 14 WERE NOT SAFE. MANY VICTIMS WERE TOO FRIGHTENED OR ASHAMED TO IDENTIFY THE CULPRITS. THE REPORT CITED CASES WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING EXAMPLES IN INDIA, GREECE, AND THE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES." GARNER

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